

WRIGHT COUNTY BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

Meeting of: May 9, 2025

MINUTES

The Wright County Board of Adjustment met on Friday, May 9, 2025, at 8:30 a.m. County Commissioner's Board Room at the Wright County Government Center, Buffalo, Minnesota. Board members present: Paul Aarestad, Dan Vick, Sandy Greninger & Bob Neumann. Absent was Dan Mol. Representing the Planning & Zoning Office was Aaron Ogle, Planner. Rachel Pence, Assistant County Attorney, legal counsel.

ACTION ON MINUTES FOR THE APRIL 18, 2025 MEETING

On a motion by Greninger, seconded by Vick, the vote carried to approve the minutes for the March 28th meeting as printed.

ACTION ON MINUTES FOR THE MARCH 28, 2025 MEETING

1. GRANDEMOORE HOMES – Cont. 4/18

LOCATION: 10434 Montgomery Ave NW – BAY SHORE LOT-001 BLOCK-001, in Section 12, Township 121, Range 28, Wright County, Minnesota. (Clearwater Lake - Southside Twp.) Tax #: 217-016-001010. Property owners: DENNIS J LEUER

REQUEST: Variance as regulated in Section 155.026, 155.056(F)(2)(d), and 155.057(E)(1) of Chapter 155, Title XV, Land Usage & Zoning of the Wright County Code of Ordinances to construct a new single-family dwelling that would be within the setback from the lake and the access elevation of the road would not meet the minimum required by floodplain standards.

Present: Doug Schultz with Grandemoore Homes and Dennis Leuer

- A. Ogle displayed the updated site plan and reviewed the request. The request to construct a home with a 1,245 sq. ft. footprint and an attached garage with a 977 sq. ft. footprint—located 46 ft. from the ordinary high-water mark of Clearwater Lake, with access elevations not meeting the minimum required—was continued from the April 18 meeting. The continuation was granted due to the Board's concerns about the proposed location within the shoreland setback. The Board allowed the continuation so the applicant could reassess the plan to determine whether the home could be redesigned to meet the shoreland building setback, indicating they were more willing to allow an encroachment on the road setback instead. The updated request is to construct the same-sized home and garage, now meeting the 75 ft. setback from the ordinary high-water mark of Clearwater Lake and located 42.6 ft. from the centerline of Montgomery Ave NW. The access elevation from Montgomery Ave NW still does not meet the minimum requirement. A variance is required to construct a new single-family dwelling less than 65 ft. from the centerline of a local road. An additional variance is needed for constructing a home on a road that does not meet the required access elevation per floodplain standards.
- B. Leuer stated that, after listening to the Board's comments in April, they redesigned the plan and hope it now meets expectations. Schultz added that they reconfigured the garage layout and adjusted the septic system layout.
- C. No comments were received from the public.
- D. Vick stated the revised drawings addressed his questions. He inquired whether the Township had reviewed the revisions. Schultz responded that the Township had not, as they were unaware it was necessary. Vick stated that, since the home would be closer to the road, he would prefer to have the Township's input, though he felt the revisions looked good overall. Ogle agreed this was a valid

concern but noted that, under R-1 (Urban/Rural Transition) zoning standards, the average setback of legal structures within 300 ft. of the road's centerline can be used for administrative approval. In this case, that average is roughly 42 ft. Nevertheless, a variance is still required due to the access elevation. Ogle added that it would be more straightforward and enforceable if the Board included the road setback in their decision. Vick agreed but still wanted to hear from the Township. Bernie Miller (MSTS) stepped forward and stated he had attended the prior Southside Township meeting, where a road issue was discussed. Miller asked whether the road in question is maintained by the Township. Ogle responded he does not believe it is but does it is part of a platted right of way. Miller explained that, at the Township meeting—with the Township Attorney present—numerous issues like this were discussed. The takeaway was that if the road is not maintained by the Township, they should not approve or deny requests related to the road, as they lack authority beyond the right-of-way. Vick expressed that he believes the Township would likely support the request but still deserves the opportunity to voice an opinion.

- E. Greninger stated she was curious if the Township provided input on the road setback. However, she appreciated that the lake setback was now being met and supported the proposal overall.
- F. Neumann felt the concerns raised during the April meeting had been addressed. He expressed no issue with the 42 ft. setback from the Township road and appreciated the compliance with the lake setback. Neumann asked if the revised home location meets elevation requirements, which Schultz confirmed. He also asked if the septic system would remain functional in flood conditions. Miller stated that the flood elevation requirements are being met. Ogle noted that the revised plan places the drainfield 15 ft. from the home, instead of the originally proposed 20 ft., but Environmental Health staff reviewed the plan and had no concerns. Miller also mentioned that drainage was addressed in the redesign. Neumann commented that while the road does not meet the approved flood elevation, it has been in place for a long time and is used by other homes. He felt this was not an issue, as residents are accustomed to occasional road flooding.
- G. Aarestad stated that he had already shared his thoughts. He lives on a road that frequently floods and has no issues with the request.
- H. Motion made by Greninger to approve the updated request is to construct a 1,245 sq. ft. footprint home with a 977 sq. ft. footprint attached garage that would be meeting the 75 ft. setback from the ordinary high-water of Clearwater Lake and be 42.6 ft. from the centerline of Montgomery Ave NW. Access elevation of Montgomery Ave NW does not meet the minimum required.
CONDITIONED: 1) Must submit grading plan with building permit application that meets floodplain requirements; 2) Must submit elevation data showing the top of building pad/floor meets floodplain elevation requirements; 3) Must submit Elevation Certificate that verifies the lowest floor elevation is at or above the regulatory flood protection elevation prior to building final; 4) Site plan noted exhibit A; 5) Building plans noted exhibit B. Seconded by Neumann.

VOTE: Greninger, Aarestad, Neumann ABSTAINED: VICK

MOTION CARRIED

2. **JOSEPH PELLEGRENE** – New

LOCATION: 8442 MONTGOMERY AVE NW – PRT OF GOV LT2, in Section 24, Township 121, Range 28, Wright County, Minnesota. (Pleasant Lake - Southside Twp.) Tax #: 217-000-244100.
Property owners: JOSEPH & JAIME PELLEGRENE

REQUEST: Variance as regulated in Section 155.026 and 155.049(F)(2) of Chapter 155, Title XV, Land Usage & Zoning of the Wright County Code of Ordinances to construct a new storage building that would be within the County Road setback.

Present: Paul Otto with Otto and Associates

- A. Ogle presented details of the property while reviewing the request. The property is 2.18 acres, zoned Urban/Rural Transition, and located on Pleasant Lake, which is classified as a General Development lake. The request is to construct a 20 ft. x 30 ft. storage building 86.5 ft. from the centerline of a County Road. A variance is required because the minimum required setback from the centerline of a County Road is 130 ft. The Township supports the request, citing a tree buffer along the County Road. The Wright County Highway Department has no concerns regarding the proposed building setback. No written public comments were received.
- B. Otto explained that the request is fairly straightforward. Upon evaluating the property, there appears to be no alternative location for the shed due to the location of the existing septic system and its alternate site. Additionally, the soils in the northeast corner have been deemed unsuitable for building. The proposed location meets the required lake setback.
- C. No public comments were received.
- D. Greninger stated she is comfortable with the proposed road setback, noting that 86.5 ft. is adequate. She also commented that the tree line provides a good buffer from the road.
- E. Neumann agreed, noting that for most roads, an 86 ft. setback would be considered sufficient. He mentioned that the County Road in question has a larger right-of-way than typical. Neumann asked why any future expansion of County Road 5 would occur to the west. Otto responded that he was unsure but speculated it was due to the road's alignment along the lake to the south. Neumann also pointed out that both building and lot coverage requirements are being met and are well within the allowed limits.
- F. Vick inquired about access to the building. Otto explained that there is a grass access area located south of the building. Vick also asked about height limitations. Ogle clarified that under the current zoning and with a lot size of just over 2 acres, the structure is subject to a sidewall height limit, which it meets. There is no restriction on roof pitch, but there is an overall height limit of 35 ft., which the proposed building also meets. Vick asked whether water could be installed in this type of building. Ogle explained that plumbing is limited to three fixtures, though none are proposed at this time. He added that the Board could impose a plumbing limitation if it is deemed relevant to the request.
- G. Aarestad stated that his concerns had been addressed. He felt the request was straightforward and expressed support for the proposal as presented.

H. Neuman moved to approve the request to construct a 20 ft. x 30 ft. storage building 86.5 ft. from the centerline of County Road 5 CONDITIONED that no plumbing would be allowed. Site plan noted Exhibit A and building plans noted Exhibit B. Seconded by Greninger.

VOTE: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3. **BERNIE MILLER (MSTS)** – New

LOCATION: 10424 MONTGOMERY AVE NW – COFIELD'S BUNGALO ISLAND ORIGINALLY 50FT OF LOTS 1 & LOTS 2&3 in Section 12, Township 121, Range 28, Wright County, Minnesota. (Clearwater Lake - Southside Twp.) Tax #: 217-023-000020. Property owners: TRAVIS L BACHMAN, VERNA BACHMAN MCNEAL, LARRY D BACHMAN and BETH A BACHMAN

REQUEST: Variance request as regulated in Section 155.026 and 155.090(B)(16) of Chapter 155, Title XV, Land Usage & Zoning of the Wright County Code of Ordinances to install a septic system in the floodway.

Present: Bernie Miller with MSTS

- A. Ogle displayed the proposed site plan and reviewed the request. The property is located on Bungalo Island, an island within Clearwater Lake situated in Southside Township. The parcel is approximately 0.58 acres, zoned Urban/Rural Transition, and lies within the mapped floodplain. The request is to install a septic system within the designated floodway, which requires a variance. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) State Floodplain Manager indicated that a mapping error likely occurred when the floodplain maps were updated, and it is believed that certain areas of the island are actually above the floodplain. However, for the floodplain designation to be officially changed, a Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) would need to be submitted to redefine the floodway and flood fringe boundaries. At this time, there is no guarantee that the proposed septic location is outside of the floodway. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Environmental Specialist confirmed that while floodplain variances are not prohibited, such a request must be pursued through the local Board of Adjustment. The Township supports the request, noting that the proposed system would replace and improve upon an existing cesspool located near the current well. No written public comments have been received.
- B. Miller explained that the proposed septic design is typical for this type of system, though the location is unique due to it being on an island. The tanks will be located just over 90 ft. from the lake. The home is used seasonally, and the current cesspool system has been problematic, prompting the need for replacement. The goal is to complete the installation while lake levels are elevated, allowing equipment access. Miller noted that demonstrating a successful installation might encourage others on the island to consider similar upgrades.
- C. No public comments were received.
- D. Neumann asked how equipment and supplies would be transported to the island. Miller explained that a barge would be used for moving equipment and materials. He mentioned that other islands with multiple septic systems often utilize a dedicated pump truck barge. Currently, this island uses a pontoon with a pumper that shuttles waste to the mainland. Neumann asked whether a community system might be a better long-term solution. Miller agreed it would be ideal, but without a government agency initiating the effort, it would be challenging to coordinate among property owners. A concern with a new sewer system could be an increase in home additions or replacements. Neumann asked whether the proposed system is a Type III or Type IV. Miller responded that it is a Mound, Type II system, which is considered low risk. Neumann added that a 30 ft. by 10 ft. system is not particularly large.

- E. Vick asked if Miller had experience with septic systems in flood zones. Miller responded that he was not aware of Clearwater Lake ever reaching the 100-year flood level. He recalled that even during high water levels in recent years, the lake had not approached that threshold. He noted that the system would include flood-related safeguards to prevent backflow and related issues. Overall, this system would be a significant improvement over the existing cesspool and could even enhance well water quality on the property.
- F. Greninger stated that her questions had been answered. Aarestad agreed.
- G. Vick moved to approve the request to install a septic system in the floodway CONDITIONED 1) All requirements of MN rule 7080 for septic systems in a floodplain must be followed; 2) Septic plan noted Exhibit A. Motion seconded by Greninger.

VOTE: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. **CALEN KUMPULA** – New

LOCATION: 13024 25TH ST SW – PRT OF GOV LT2 & LT3 in Section 14, Township 119, Range 28, Wright County, Minnesota. (Cokato Lake - Cokato Twp.) Tax #: 205-000-141404, 205-000-141405.
Property owners: CALEN P & HANNAH L KUMPULA

REQUEST: Variance as regulated in Section 155.026 and 155.048(F)(2) of Chapter 155, Title XV, Land Usage & Zoning of the Wright County Code of Ordinances to construct an addition to an existing home that is located with the Township Road setback.

Present: Calen & Hannah Kumpula

- A. Ogle displayed the proposed site plan and reviewed the request. The property is located at 13024 25th St. SW in Cokato Township. It comprises 11.84 acres and is zoned General Agriculture. A previous variance request, approved in 1991, allowed an addition to the home that was approximately 41 feet from the nearest point of the road. The current request is to construct a 24 ft. x 43 ft. addition to the existing home, which would be located 38 feet from the centerline of 25th St. SW. A variance is required because the ordinance mandates a 65-foot setback from the centerline of the traveled roadway. The Township has approved the request, stating that the proposed changes will not impact the road. No written public comments have been received.
- B. H. Kumpula explained that they now intend to build a 34 ft. x 30 ft. addition, modifying the original plan.
- C. Public Comment
 - Dan Bravinder, Supervisor with Cokato Township, noted that the preliminary staff report incorrectly stated the Township approved a deck. The final staff report corrected the minutes. The Township reviewed the entire proposal and had no concerns with the addition. He emphasized that the parcel is 7 acres, the road is slow-speed and low-volume, and the topography is flat. The Township anticipates no impact on neighboring properties.
- D. Vick verified the size is changing to be smaller. C. Kumpula confirmed and explained that, east to west, the addition was shortened to 30 ft. x 34 ft. Vick questioned if the septic system would need to be addressed. C. Kumpula confirmed they had the system verified.
- E. Greninger asked if a deck is involved, with C. Kumpula stating there is an existing deck to be extended roughly 8 ft. to catch the doorway. Greninger asked if the Township approved the deck. Bravinder confirmed the Township is okay with the plans and deck as mentioned.
- F. Neumann questioned the age of the home, with H. Kumpula stating the main portion was built in the 1860s, with additions done over the years. There was a fire in 2008, at which point the entire home was updated. Neumann questioned when they purchased the home, with C. Kumpula stating 2017. Neumann asked why they wanted to expand now and what the current square footage of the home is. C. Kumpula stated they need more living area with 7 kids, and no additional bedrooms. Ogle stated the County Assessor notes above-grade living space is 1,452 sq. ft., with a crawlspace. Neumann stated the original plans showed 1,032 sq. ft. is being added, which is not quite doubling the size. The hardship is that both the old house and the road have been there a very long time, and the setback variance is needed due to the road. He is okay with what is being requested.

- G. Aarestad stated he is okay with the presented request.
- H. Ogle questioned the Board if they wanted to see an updated set of plans prior to voting, and if not, then the motion would have to encompass the change in size and the deck. He suggested the motion could include a limitation to the deck, but in the end, it is a challenge to make a motion for approval without plans that avoids misinterpretation. Neumann suggested the item be continued until there are plans to review.
- I. Greninger moved to continue the item to June 6, 2025, to allow time for the applicant to revise and present updated plans.

DISCUSSION: H. Kumpula asked if there was a chance to scrap the change and move forward. Ogle established that the applicant is wondering if the Board would approve the initial plans of 24 ft. x 43 ft., with it being known that the size can go smaller, but if the dimensions change or the deck is installed, they would need to come back to the Board. C. Kumpula explained the addition area and that they'd need to cut back the deck. Vick questioned the Board on how they felt about including a deck parameter as a condition. Neumann stated he would like to see the plans approved with what they are intending to build.

Ogle called out that there is a motion on the floor that has yet to be seconded.

Greninger moved to withdraw her motion, with Aarestad acknowledging.

- J. Vick moved to approve the request to construct a 24 ft. x 43 ft. addition to the existing home that is 38 ft. from the centerline of 25th St. SW. Site plan noted Exhibit A and building plans noted Exhibit B. Seconded by Greninger.

VOTE: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

5. **NICK & MARINA JEPSON** – New

LOCATION: 1098 44TH ST NE – SHADY HEIGHTS LOT-003 LTS3 & 4 in Section 08, Township 120, Range 25, Wright County, Minnesota. (Lake Constance – Buffalo Twp.) Tax #: 202-020-000030.
Property owners: NICHOLAS V & MARINA E JEPSON

REQUEST: Variance as regulated in Section 155.026, 155.049(F)(3), and 155.057(E)(1) of Chapter 155, Title XV, Land Usage & Zoning of the Wright County Code of Ordinances to construct a new storage building within the lake setback and increase the size of the existing deck attached to the home inside the lake and side yard setback.

Present: Nick and Marina Jepson

- A. Ogle displayed the proposed site plan and reviewed the request. The property is 0.51 acres, zoned Urban/Rural Transition, and located on Lake Constance, which is classified as Recreational Development. A variance was approved in 1987 that allowed a home to be located 68 ft. from the lake. That approval was conditioned on any lakeside deck being no closer than 65 ft. from the lake. The current request is to construct a 24 ft. x 36 ft. storage building 55.3 ft. from the ordinary high-water mark of Lake Constance and to construct a new 16 ft. x 45 ft. deck attached to the home, located 65.7 ft. from the ordinary high-water mark and 7.5 ft. from the east side yard. A variance is required to construct a storage building or deck within 100 ft. of the ordinary high-water mark of Lake Constance. A variance is also required to construct a deck addition to the home that is within the 15 ft. side yard setback. The Township has approved the request. No written responses were received from the public
- B. No comments were made by the applicant or the public.
- C. Greninger stated she had no questions and was comfortable with the request.
- D. Neumann asked if the existing deck was in poor condition. M. Jepson confirmed that the deck needs repair and mentioned they recently added a large patio door to the lower level, which they would like the new deck to cover. Neumann stated he had no issue with the deck portion of the request since it complies with the previously approved variance. He then questioned how close the proposed shed would be to the mound system. M. Jepson estimated the distance to be about 15 ft., and Ogle confirmed it was over the required 10 ft. setback. Neumann expressed concern that the proposed storage building is large for a lake accessory building and questioned whether it should be built at all, especially considering the home is restricted from being closer to the lake, so why should a shed be allowed closer? M. Jepson explained that they would have moved the building farther from the lake, but there is no suitable land. N. Jepson added that the location of the septic system occupies the area where they would have preferred to place the building, and it cannot be moved. M. Jepson also stated that neighboring properties to the east and west appear to have homes within or closer than 55 ft. of the lake, which influenced their decision. Neumann noted while a shed is useful, it doesn't affect the functionality of the home, and this could be considered a self-created hardship. He pointed out the home has existed for years without the proposed structure. Neumann asked how long the applicants had owned the home. M. Jepson stated they had owned it for 1½ years. She explained that due to storage needs, they don't use the existing garage for vehicles, and the outdoor parking area is limited and close to the road. Her brother, who owns the neighboring property to the east, has similar parking and storage issues.

They decided to build a shared, larger storage shed on their larger lot to allow both families to use their garages for vehicles and the new structure for shared storage.

- E. Vick expressed concern about moving any structure closer to the lake. He also noted that the concrete slab would end up being only 42 ft. from the lake, which raises concerns about water quality and runoff. M. Jepson replied that they could consider changing the access location. The lakeside access was proposed because they can launch their boat directly from their property. Vick expressed additional concern about the possibility of a driveway or path leading to the lake. He stated he would prefer to see a plan with the shed placed at least 65 ft. from the lake, which could require redesign. M. Jepson acknowledged her concerns but said she is open to exploring alternatives. Vick also stated he would like the deck to meet a 10 ft. side yard setback. M. Jepson responded that they were trying to connect the new deck to a side door to eliminate the need for a stairway. They are willing to make some adjustments. Vick reiterated that a 10 ft. setback is reasonable, and adjustments to the plan could make that happen. M. Jepson confirmed that he (Vick) wants the shed 65 ft. from the lake and the deck 10 ft. from the side property line.
- F. Aarestad stated he was comfortable with the proposed deck. Regarding the shed, he believes a 65 ft. setback could be achieved. He said he would support a reduced side yard setback to accommodate pulling the shed back to 65 ft. Vick asked Aarestad about the deck being so close to the property line, and Aarestad replied that he was fine with the proposed location. Neumann suggested that a small portion of the deck could be moved or angled to increase the distance from the property line.
- G. Vick moved to continue the meeting to June 6th, 2025, to allow time for the applicant to make adjustments to the plans based on conversation. Seconded by Greninger.

DISCUSSION: Ogle summarized that the Board is requesting that the storage building be moved to at least 65 ft. from the ordinary high-water mark, potentially requiring a reduction in its size and the deck meet a 10 ft. side yard setback. He also asked how the Board would feel if the building encroached on the 10 ft. mound system setback. Both Vick and Aarestad stated they would be okay with some encroachment into the septic system setback.

VOTE: CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Meeting adjourned at 9:52 am.

Respectfully submitted,



Aaron Ogle
Planning & Zoning Planner

AO: sld

CC: Board of Adjustment
Applicants/Owners
Twp. Clerks